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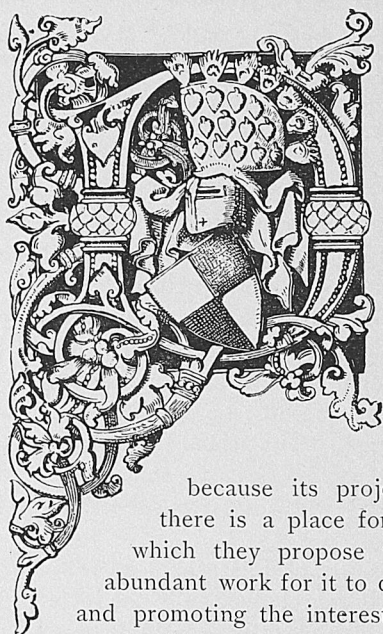
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COMMENT AND REVIEW.



DOING is always better than promising, and yet in the initial number of a new publication the public naturally looks for a certain declaration of purpose. AMERICAN ART has been started because its projectors feel that there is a place for it in the field which they propose to occupy, and abundant work for it to do in conserving and promoting the interests of art in this country. The more definite plans of the management are set forth on another page. This number will serve to indicate pretty clearly the general character that it is intended the periodical shall take and the line along which it will progress. Further than that we can only commend our readers to subsequent issues, in which we hope to make evident a constant growth and development in the path which we have marked out for ourselves to pursue.

The American artist must, for a time at least, paint earthly pictures. These need not necessarily be ignoble, any more than the greatest painters of any time; the Dutch were ignoble when they pictured the varied sentiments of the day life of their people. The average American is not a parable-

loving person. He cares not for artificial effect in incident, though he may applaud the chromo. Facts and finish, a well-told story and any amount of sentiment are what he wants. Our artists must paint to interest and amuse, for it is now a questioning of the heart and eye rather than of the mind with our public. Thought and invention will come as soon as there is a demand for them.

About art teaching as a profession we have heard a good deal of late; of it as a trade we have heard little, and very singularly, too, since this *metier* is attaining important proportions. We have been struck by the growth of this new business by examining the prospectuses of a large number of art academies and schools and of institutions devoted to the arts, sciences and polite studies which are either sanctioned by the experience of time or are the vogue of the day. No college, seminary or school but has now its teacher of art—a fact in itself encouraging and significant of the important position that a knowledge of painting and sculpture is taking in schemes of broad education. The gratification which all lovers of art must feel at seeing their favorite study thus encouraged is tempered somewhat when it is noticed of what sort of material its teachers are often made. In nine cases out of ten they are alike “to fortune and to fame unknown,” persons who have failed in the technical practice of art, or, having seen nothing of art abroad, either ancient or modern, give to their pupils the results of unintelligent and random book study, unassisted by a particle of personal feeling or discrimination. No wonder art is voted a dry study by most pupils of our colleges and seminaries, when the teachers know nothing this side of Pheidias in sculpture and Raphael in painting, nor have

gained from an observation of foreign countries and manners any hint of the personal human quality, which alone makes art of vital significance to the present time. We shall do better in this matter, as in others, by-and-by, and find art as interesting as it now seems dry. An improvement might already be made by our wealthier institutions of learning, that can afford to make it worth the while of liberally educated men to devote themselves to teaching the broad and philosophical principles of art. If they will do this they may greatly increase their influence and reputation and force other institutions to follow their example or confine themselves to teaching branches which they are better able to promote.

Artists are not a migratory class, generally speaking; in fact, they are usually quite contented with a locality when once they have become fairly established. Like all other professional men, however, they are ever on the alert to improve their condition, and, naturally enough, they gravitate to those sections of the country which are thoroughly alive with commercial activity. Portland, Providence, Boston and Philadelphia, while they have their art clubs, art exhibitions and a number of excellent art schools, do not support the real talent that can be found struggling in their wealthy precincts. Springfield, Mass., strangely enough, is the superior of any one of these cities in the patronage of American art. New York, Chicago and several western cities do more for their artists than the rest of the country

combined, twice over. It is not to be wondered at, then, that the artists of eastern cities are slowly yet surely centering on New York as their field of operation, and this migration will doubtless continue just as long as there is no patriotic effort made to recognize their ability elsewhere.

Japanese art has become almost naturalized in this country. It is certainly exercising a very positive influence upon our native art and is unquestionably a permanent and a powerful, as it is a conspicuous factor in the moulding of what will one day be a distinct individual American school. As we study the history and the characteristics of other art movements in reference to their influence upon our art development it will be found profitable, as well as agreeable, to follow that of Japan, which has already become such a component part of our own. In this light Mr. Louis Wertheimer's cursory papers on Japanese art and Japanese artists, the first of which appears in this number, will be, we think, read with a great deal of pleasure, and aside from their purely literary value will prove abundantly interesting and instructive.

Educate the young to a knowledge of the beautiful. Their minds are ever ready to receive it, for the love of adornment is born in every human being and only needs to be developed. Its maturity will be sooner reached if the seed is well nourished.

